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Class No.....

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## THE REBELLION IN BURMA, APRIL 1931—MARCH 1932.

*Tharrawaddy and Insein.*

1. Towards the end of April and the beginning of May 1931 the position in Tharrawaddy and Insein Districts may be described as a stalemate in favour of Government. The area was strongly held by Government forces. The Military Police in the two districts had been reinforced by 728 men and additional Civil Police had been raised in both districts. There were troops at Okkan in the Insein District, at Tharrawaddy, and at Zigôn in the north of Tharrawaddy District. The confidence of disaffected villagers was being gradually restored and cases of village resistance to rebel and dacoit attacks were becoming more numerous. Moreover, whereas in January, owing to the rebel tactics of gun-looting raids, it had been found necessary to recall village guns, by this time it had become feasible to arm certain villages, and the demand for defence arms was increasing, particularly from loyal Karen villagers who had from the outset rendered excellent service. One large and very active gang, namely Krishna Mutu's gang, had been completely broken up and Krishna Mutu himself, a half-caste Madrassi and local criminal, had been wounded and captured. On the other hand, two important rebel leaders were still active; San Htu, an *ex*-soldier and Myat Aung, a veteran seditionist second only to Saya San for rebel prestige, were at large. It is true that they were compelled to make their headquarters in remote jungle, but they were still able to choose time and place for their murderous sallies. In the Insein District two other important groups were also to be reckoned with: "Boh" Aw's gang, and in the riverine *kaing* jungle tract on the borders of Insein and Henzada Districts, there was a gang led by two brothers—Aung Shwe and Aung Pe.

*Henzada.*

2. In March 1931 the rebellion in Henzada District settled down to its most difficult phase, namely that of a guerrilla warfare, the rebels avoiding Government forces of any strength, but effectively breaking up the peace of the countryside by sporadic raids in all directions attended by vicious cruelty. A reign of terror spread over the countryside; anybody suspected of Government sympathies was liable to be murdered. For example, Ah Tet, a toddy licensee, was cut to pieces on the 13th of March, because there was a rumour that he had given food to the Military Police, and his house was burned to the ground. On the 12th of March, Maung Shwe Lu's house in Yegyat village was burned and his son-in-law appallingly mutilated. At the same time villagers were compelled to buy exemption from rebel outrages by subscribing to rebel funds. In one attack on the 26th of March a millowner of Zaungdan was deprived of a sum of Rs. 45,000 in notes, and jewellery valued at Rs. 1,500. At the beginning of the outbreak there was only a small force of Military Police at the district headquarters, and, although reinforcements were sent as quickly as possible from Rangoon, there was not sufficient force in the district to stamp out the dangerous guerrilla phase of the rebellion. The villagers in the affected area were either overawed or sympathetic, and moreover the rebels had behind them a large block of forest on the west of the district, in which they could lurk and mature their plans, as the Tharrawaddy rebels did in the Pegu Yomas. The Henzada rebellion had thus by April reached much the same stage as the Tharrawaddy and Insein movements. The rising had been effectively checked, but, on the other hand, in certain tracts law and order was being set at naught, and, as the authorities with the forces at their command were unable to get to grips with the rebels, there was the danger that,

nourished by the loot and murder of village raids, the spirit of rebellion might flare up at any moment in a major outbreak which might quite possibly threaten the railway towns.

### *The Expansion of Rebellion.*

3. While the rebellion had been stamped out in Yamèthin and Dedaye and held in check in Tharrawaddy, Insein and Henzada the movement in the course of April and May showed an alarming capacity for expansion. Early in April reports were received of wholesale tattooing in Thayetmyo and Prome Districts, the familiar preliminary for a rising. There was also restlessness in Bassein District. These three districts gave cause for great anxiety as they all three comprised extensive hinterland tracts, and once rebellion established a hold on Thayetmyo and Prome Districts all Upper Burma with its vast stretches of jungle would be in danger. Thayetmyo was the first to go up closely followed by Prome. In Bassein, however, the district authorities received information just in time to enable them to intervene at the critical stage when the villagers were being worked up into superstitious frenzy, but had not yet broken out. Early in May the district authorities effected 11 arrests, including the 6 lieutenants of Maung Mya *alias* Maung Maung, an impostor trading on the fact that he had been the husband of Princess Tin Tin *alias* Hmetka Minthami. Towards the end of May the spread of rebellion was effectively checked by the arrest of a dangerous seditionist, *Pôngyi* U Pyinnyatataza *alias* Shwèkodaw, with three of his followers. A well-known tattooer, Saya Po Tun *alias* Saya Tun, was caught by the Myaungmya Police and Po Myin, a "minlaung" impostor, was caught near the Myaungmya border.

4. But in Thayetmyo and Prome Districts the secret preparations for rebellion were widespread and fairly thorough, and moreover the movement was led and planned by a more than ample supply of conspirators versed in the tactics of Saya San. On the 10th of April, with startling suddenness, the rebellion began in Thayetmyo District. The usual ground-work had been laid for the outbreak by dint of persistent sedition percolating to the villages through *wunthanu athins* and village *pôngyis*. The Saya San of Thayetmyo District was a certain U Arthapa *alias* Saya Nyan of Kama, of whom mention has been made in connection with the Henzada outbreak, and he modelled his tactics faithfully on Saya San's example. The first outbreak occurred at a village called Kyaukpin in the south part of the district on the 10th of April. A headmen's conference was being held and the rebels seized the opportunity to start the outbreak. Kyaukpin was suddenly attacked and the Yenatha headman and a Veterinary Assistant called Maung Tin were murdered with every circumstance of brutality. The next day a Police Station Officer and three constables were killed at Ponna village, 18 miles south-west of Thayetmyo and their firearms were taken. The authorities were prompt to establish contact with the rebels, but the forces were numerically too few to impress a whole countryside seething with excitement and firmly convinced that the administration was at an end. On the 13th of April, the District Superintendent of Police with 50 Military Police engaged a crowd of 300 rebels near Ton village. The rebels were dispersed with 7 killed and many wounded, but unfortunately the District Superintendent of Police, Mr. Smith, was very severely wounded in the thigh. In this engagement the astonishment of the rebels to find themselves vulnerable after all was most remarkable. On April 21st, 25 Military Police under Messrs. Beastall and Tate engaged about 400 rebels at Yenatha and routed them. The rebels left 15 corpses on the ground. Again on April 23rd mounted infantry and a platoon of Punjabis inflicted a very heavy defeat on 200 rebels at Inbe in the Kama Township. The Government forces suffered no casualties, whereas 40 rebel corpses were found. Later, on May 7th, the District Superintendent of Police with a column engaged 160 rebels at Yankintaung Hill near Mezali. Before fire was opened the rebels exhibited in their behaviour absolute confidence in the efficacy of their charms, their tattooing and their charmed handkerchiefs. They advanced towards their antagonists slowly and deliberately, taking their time, obviously thinking that they had merely to walk up and massacre the Government men. A machine

gun was brought into action with great effect ; 21 were killed, 14 wounded and 14 prisoners were taken. In spite of these successes, a large part of the district was thrown into a state of wild disorder. The rebels were raiding all over the place, destroying Government documents, intimidating and murdering headmen and looting guns. A reign of terror spread over the Kama Township and the southern parts of Thayetmyo and Mindon Townships, and the position became such that, in the words of the Commissioner, Magwe Division, "the King's writ did not run."

5. In Prome District the rebellion started on the 3rd of May with a dacoity at Kyaukkwin, and on the following day Paungzu was attacked and the headman's gun looted. Mr. Austin, the District Superintendent of Police, at once set out on May the 4th with a small party of Military and Civil Police for Kyaukkwin village. There he heard that mass tattooing was in progress at Myoma village, 4 miles from Wettigan. Unfortunately he divided his forces, leaving his Military Police at Wettigan and proceeding himself with a small party of Civil Police to Myoma. On arrival there he found the village to all appearances deserted. He went with his Inspector to investigate, leaving his men resting. A gang of 60 rebels suddenly surrounded him, cutting him off from his men. He and his Inspector were overwhelmed by numbers and murdered, and seven constables met the same fate. One Sub-Inspector and four constables escaped to Wettigan, and the Sub-Inspector of Police there in charge of the Military Police was informed. He proceeded at once to Myoma and partial retribution was exacted, 7 rebels being killed and a musket recovered. As in Thayetmyo and Henzada, however, matters, had gone too far to be summarily checked by a few successes in the field. The rebellion spread and on the 16th of May 41 Myoma rebels, with 4 guns and 4 revolvers, attacked the house of the Banbwagon headman, the Ledi headman, and the Nyaungbintha headman. The latter was abducted and later murdered in cold blood. On the 31st of May the Wettigan Police-station Officer with 10 Military Police was suddenly attacked by 100 rebels near Inya village while investigating a dacoity, and he was compelled to fall back on Wettigan Police-station. There followed a big rebel concentration and, on the 1st of June the rebels, 500 strong, attacked Wettigan Police-station. This was one of the most determined direct attacks ever made by the rebels. The firing lasted for about four hours. During the course of the action the rebels attempted to burn down the Police-station by setting fire to neighbouring houses. Ultimately they had to disperse with many wounded, leaving 18 killed. This attack had been previously planned. The bridge between Allanmyo and Wettigan was half sawn through to prevent reinforcements being rushed up in motor lorries. In May and June, a large area in the north part of the district was subjected to all the usual horrors of a breakdown in the administration. Fortunately on the 14th of June, Inspector U Kin Maung with 30 Military Police succeeded in repulsing a sudden attack by 70 rebels from Thabyegon with heavy losses. On the 2nd of June rebel headquarters near Maudaw were attacked successfully, while on June the 5th a party of Punjabis attacked a rebel concentration, some 300 strong, at Wetto, and, for the first time perhaps in the rebellion, the rebels were caught in mass by Lewis gun and rifle fire, with the result that over a third of this large gang was killed or wounded. By these successes, the usual salutary check was administered to the first wave of rebellion in its initial phase of supreme confidence and arrogance. The spectacular slaughter of rebels at Wetto undoubtedly had a widespread moral effect. Moreover, in Prome District the horror and tragedy of rebellion dawned on a certain section of the priesthood, and with their help the surrendering movement was initiated. For the moment it seemed that a wave of depression seized upon the mass of the rebels ; for the moment they seemed to have caught a glimpse of the criminal futility of their activities. In the middle of June mass surrendering took place, and the figures leapt up by hundreds until in July there were over a thousand who had taken advantage of the Government amnesty.

#### *The Worst Phase. Revival and Expansion of Rebellion.*

6. There can be no doubt that in May and June the situation was at its worst. Not only did the rebellion reach its maximum extension, not only

were new areas dragged into the turmoil, but in the areas where rebellion had been established for a comparatively long time, there were indications of returning confidence. Outrages occurred which showed by their audacity that the rebels were getting over their initial reverses. In the riverine tract on the borders of Insein, Tharrawaddy and Henzada Districts, taking advantage of dense *kaing* grass for cover, there flourished a gang under two brothers—Aung Shwe and Aung Pe. These two were young men of that bold and cunning adventurous stamp which always comes to the fore in times of disorder. On the 27th of April, Aung Shwe led an attack on the Apyauk Police Outpost. In this affair he compelled the Apyauk headman to assist him. The Apyauk headman was compelled to go to the outpost as if he was bringing in rebel prisoners. As soon as admittance was gained, the prisoners, whose bonds were a mere pretence leapt on the police. The result was that a Sub-Inspector of Police was wounded and a special constable was killed, while a revolver, 7 carbines and 382 rounds were looted. On May 12th, the Tharrawaw Police-station Officer was surprised near Mayindo village by 30 rebels with 10 guns. A head constable was killed, the Police-station Officer and two police constables severely wounded and a musket and a shot gun were lost. On May 15th, early in the morning, 30 rebels armed with 20 guns attacked a police outpost at Ledu Sabyuzu which was manned by a Karen Sub-Inspector, 4 Police Constables and 13 Karen Special Constables. This post is situated in the Apyauk area which is the portion of Henzada District on the east of the Irrawaddy bordering on Tharrawaddy and Insein Districts. The post was completely surprised and there was practically no resistance. The Sub-Inspector was killed and the rebels retired with 10 shot guns, a carbine, a revolver and 500 rounds of ammunition. They also celebrated the occasion by burning down a number of houses in the village. On the 23rd of May Taungbobauk Outpost, Henzada District, was attacked. This was one of a number of new punitive police posts, and at the time it was still under construction. The rebels attempted a surprise, but fortunately the police kept their heads and repulsed them with considerable loss. Just before this, on the 19th of May, something approaching a pitched battle occurred in the dark between the rebels and a Government column under the District Superintendent of Police, encamped at Yogyi. The rebels attempted a surprise just before dawn and there was heavy firing on both sides till daybreak. Several rebels were wounded, one was killed and one of the guns taken in the Ledu attack was recovered, but on the Government side a sepoy was killed and another was seriously wounded, while three sepoys, a Sub-Inspector of Police and two constables were injured. On the 28th of May, Aung Shwe and his gang raided the big village of Apyauk. There were 16 of them and each had a gun. Aung Shwe took his time and systematically plundered 8 houses and a pawnshop. He spent 5 hours in the village and departed with loot of over Rs. 10,000. On May 10th, the rebels attempted a daring enterprise calculated to put Henzada town itself in their hands. At about 2 a.m., 30 of them crept into Henzada town to the Police-station. Two or three rushed up the stairs leading to the drawbridge their idea being to jump the gap and break upon the lockup within. Fortunately the sentry at the head of the drawbridge was on the alert and shot the first man up the stairs. Another party of rebels had meantime gone round to the back where they attacked 4 Punjabis whom they found there. A Lance-Naik and a sepoy were severely wounded and one sepoy was slightly injured. Four rebels were killed, but the rest disappeared and have never been identified. It was clear, however, that the large and prosperous town of Henzada had only narrowly escaped an open outbreak of rebellion. In the meantime it was realised that there was imminent danger of the rebellion reaching hitherto untouched areas. In May information was received that 20 rebels crossed the Bawle river near Yandoon from east to west in order to join up with the west bank rebels for an attack on Sagagyi in Maubin District. The Maubin authorities, however, were on the alert and the attack did not materialise. On the Magwe border in Upper Burma, the ominous symptom of tattooing was reported in a few villages and a bold attempt was made on May 7th by 7 men at Chauk to gain possession of the Assistant Warden's fire-arms by torturing his servants in his absence. Twenty-six arrests of tattooed men were effected in Magwe District, and the promptness of this action effectively

anticipated and prevented the rising which usually follows mass tattooing, unless there is intervention at the critical moment. At the end of June, tattooing and arrests were reported from Bassein, Myitkyina, Katha and the Upper Chindwin, and in the Shan States rebellion actually broke out.

### *The Shan States Rising.*

7. As early as the end of January an unknown Burman had arrived at a village in an out-of-the-way corner of Hsipaw State, where he donned *pōngyi*'s robes, began to recruit men for a Galon society and to render them invulnerable. Information only reached the Hsipaw State officials in May. The *pōngyi* disappeared, and several persons who were arrested were subsequently released as no definite evidence was obtained against them. The preparations however had gone further than was suspected and towards the end of June it was reported that 200 or 300 men had risen in the Lawksawk State in the Southern Shan States near the Hsipaw village, where the *pōngyi* had been at work. The *pōngyi* subsequently turned out to be Saya San under a new name of U Nyanna. After he had been summarily ejected from his "palace" at Alantaung, Saya San appears to have fled north. He was badly frightened, but after a long unmolested rest in a Mandalay monastery, he began to feel himself again. One bad fright was not enough to rid him of the obsession of his own greatness. Once a king always a king; all he wanted was a new area to start afresh in, and this he found in the Shan States. He went up, assumed the guise of a *pōngyi* and started busily spreading the infection he found so effective in Lower Burma. Expert in the jargon of omens and necromancy, which has such a strong fascination for the Burman and Shan mind, he soon established a footing. Before long he divested himself of his monkhood and solemnly mounted a throne for the second time. Having founded a new "city," the city of victory, he sent out his roughly organized gangs to challenge the existing regime. On the 1st of July a police party from Taungbyauk was fired on by rebels, and the next day Government columns crossing the Nalu river were opposed by 150 rebels. In the action which ensued 40 rebels were killed, about the same number wounded, and 21 guns and many fighting *dahs* were seized, while only one man was wounded on the Government side. On the 6th of July, a surprise attack was made on a ration base at Nawnghkio, and for a brief time the issue was in the balance as a Lewis gun temporarily fell into the hands of the rebels. However, the rebels were driven off with considerable loss. The next day, July 7th, the rebel headquarters were located and destroyed. This happily brought the rebellion to an end in the Shan States. By the end of July over a hundred men had been arrested and the rising appeared to be completely quelled, although Saya San with about 15 followers was still at large in Mandalay District whither he had fled. The Shan States rebellion seems to have been but an impromptu conspiracy compared with the machinations which had caused so much trouble in Lower Burma. It was not feasible to organize a formidable rebellion in the mountainous and thinly populated Shan States on just a few months' seditious activity, and hence at the first touch, the rebellion collapsed and all was quiet. Saya San himself was hunted down in August. Three of his followers who were caught by the Mandalay pickets betrayed the position of Saya San's camp which was raided on the 30th of July. Saya San and his followers escaped, and made their way back to the Shan States, where good co-operation between the Mandalay and Shan States' authorities led to his arrest on the 2nd of August in the Hsipaw State. He was sent to Tharrawaddy, where he was at once tried by the Special Tribunal for his part in the Tharrawaddy rebellion and sentenced to death. After his appeal and petitions for clemency had been rejected he was finally hanged in November.

### *The Pegu Outbreak.*

8. From the earliest days of the rebellion the possibility of rebel penetration into Pegu from Insein and Tharrawaddy was envisaged. Steps were taken to watch the main routes over the Yomas from the west. In

January, gangs made their appearance in the forest reserves operated by Messrs. Findlay & Co. Forest bungalows were wantonly burnt and a few village outrages occurred on the western edge of the plain. Guns also had to be withdrawn from villages within striking distance of the Yomas. There was a good deal of unrest and ferment all over the district. Croakers were whispering of portentous calamities in store; obscure prophecies were freely quoted; an atmosphere of foreboding prevailed. There was a mushroom growth of 9 cubit pagodas constructed scrupulously in accordance with mysteriously imparted specifications; for only 9 cubit pagoda villages would escape calamity in the day of judgment when the Setkyamin and Bo Po Aung and the Sayagyi Saya San would sweep the foreigner from the land. Even in Rangoon divine honours were being paid to this trinity. During the harvest season moreover communal disturbances in Nyaunglebin Subdivision and southward near the Hanthawaddy border showed how near the surface anarchy was lurking. But fortunately for several months no organizer of rebellion appeared on the scene. When the rebellion did start on June 30th it was in the Upper Pegu River Valley, a tract of country with natural advantages for an outbreak of the Burmese type. The upper valley is very different from the flat paddy plain on which is the bulk of the district population. To walk from Pegu to Sitpinzeik is a matter of 8 or 9 miles, but it is enough to pass from the humdrum monotony of the main plain to a more primitive area, where the influence of the wild is strong. From Sitpinzeik west through Htandawgyi to Zaungtu and ultimately Taikkyi the ground rises steadily, cultivation becomes more patchy and the jungle closes in. Here was an area, where the necromantic hocus-pocus of the seditionist was completely in tune with popular mentality. There was the retreat of a spacious hinterland close by and touch could be kept with the veteran rebels of Insein and Tharrawaddy. Subsequent investigation has shown that there were about seven organizers behind the movement, the chief of whom were Tun We and Tun Myat. It is astonishing to find that one rebel leader, Po Tun, was a member of the District Council.

9. The rising started on the now familiar lines. No strain of higher if mistaken motive can be detected. It was a campaign of hate and cupidity. The rebels were not out to conquer or die for a cause. Sustained by their superstitions they thought they were going to have a walk over, that they had but to lay the edge of their *dahs* to the necks of their enemies and help themselves to the property of others. In this temper the Pegu rebels attacked Htandawgyi and Wapyangon. On the first day they committed two murders, burnt the Government bungalow and looted 5 guns. Shortly afterwards they raided 19 other villages, seizing 20 guns. One of their feats was to make a bonfire of a Karen church. Thereafter murders followed in dismal series as the local guns were looted. On July 15th they attacked Zaungtu, a large place, the last outpost of village life in the Yomas. The Government bungalow was burned and 5 guns looted. By this time the rebels were at the top of their form. They had been well blooded but not yet resisted. They were ripe for a trial of strength with Government and they had this on July 12th with the usual results. Captain Dart and his party were searching a field hut near Sinsakan when they were surprised by a fierce attack by about 80 rebels. In the first rush 2 sepoys were killed and Captain Dart, 3 sepoys and 2 Civil Police were slightly wounded. Effective fire however was brought to bear on the rebels, who fled leaving 15 dead, 6 guns, many fighting *dahs* and charms. Thereafter the movement lapsed into the guerrilla dacoity phase. The rebels did not again venture into a fight with any considerable Government force. They betook themselves to hidden camps in the depths of the jungle whence they issued on plundering raids, murdering the law-abiding, collecting money from the lukewarm and generally throwing the valley into a miserable state of confusion.

#### *Rural Anarchy: April—August.*

10. Generally speaking, it may be said that large tracts in the disturbed areas were in a state of anarchy in the months of April to August inclusive. This was the heyday of the "boh." It must be borne in mind that, even in

normal times, the Burman villager has displayed an amazing toleration of the criminal. A well-known dacoit in his own area enjoys a great prestige, based partly on fear and partly on a queer kind of reverence for the audacity which defies what ordinary men respect. It may be imagined therefore what a hold the rebel "boh" had, and still has, on the imagination of the peasantry. During this period the rebel gangs received the sobriquet of "*taungbawthas*," i.e., the men of the hills. A certain mystery surrounded them. They were not to be seen ordinarily by day time, but the fear and awe which they inspired lay heavy on the countryside. In this stage of the rebellion, it was easy for a well-known "boh" to draw his food supplies from the villages and to collect money systematically over and above the loot of his dacoities. These collections were called "*sitsayeik*," war costs. The villager tended to feel that there were two Governments in the land, one being the everyday affair against which he had probably always grumbled, but in the last decade had been taught to hate, and the other the new Government of the "*taungbawthas*," to his mind a more romantic and colourful Government. He felt rebellion was fighting in alliance with his *nats*, a thing of the woods and hills invested with glamour and mystery, and he simply did not know which side was going to win. It took months of steady Government pressure, assisted by Military demonstrations and other displays of overwhelming strength, to start to convince the villagers that the routine Government was after all invincible. During this period, roughly April to August, the bonds of customary respect for Government were loosed, and a terrible orgy of crime, dacoity, robbery, murder and rape, was manifested. An examination of the figures of important crime, excluding murder, is instructive in this regard. The position may be seen in the statement below :—

District.				Year.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.
(1)				(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Insein	...	...	...	1931 (1930)	53 (5)	43 (8)	52 (2)	35 (0)	17 (2)
Pegu	...	...	...	1931 (1930)	26 (16)	36 (13)	71 (10)	61 (5)	47 (4)
Tharrawaddy	...	...	...	1931 (1930)	34 (1)	64 (4)	64 (2)	30 (1)	16 (2)
Henzada	...	...	...	1931 (1930)	43 (2)	62 (2)	142 (1)	103 (4)	80 (1)
Thayetmyo	...	...	...	1931 (1930)	17 (1)	87 (1)	76 (1)	165 (0)	115 (2)
Prome	...	...	...	1931 (1930)	13 (2)	58 (4)	73 (7)	83 (2)	64 (1)

To protect the persons and property of the law-abiding over a large area, to ensure against sudden revivals of the fighting spirit, to clean out the gang infested jungle was the difficult task with which Government was faced as soon as it became clear that a few victories in the field would not suffice to crush rebellion.

#### *Reinforcements and Main Military Dispositions.*

11. The normal Military Garrison of Burma, two Battalions of British Infantry and four Battalions of Indian Infantry, was soon found inadequate to cope with the situation, and further troops had to be asked for from India.

On May 13th, the 1/17th Dogra Regiment arrived at Rangoon and on May 23rd reached Myingyan. Early in June the 3/16th Punjab Regiment arrived at Tharrawaddy and the H.Q., 12th Infantry Brigade reached Mandalay. On the 12th of June, a detachment of the 2nd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment arrived and was posted at Toungoo and Mandalay. A few days later, the rest of the 2nd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment was sent to Toungoo. Towards the end of June the 3/10th Baluch Regiment arrived and went to Henzada. In July, the 2/5th Mahratta Light Infantry

arrived and relieved the Punjab Regiment at Tharrawaddy, the 3/16th Punjab Regiment being transferred from Tharrawaddy to Prome. In August the 2/20th Burma Rifles was moved from Mandalay to Rangoon. On the 10th of August, the 3/6th Rajputana Rifles came from India and were sent to Allanmyo. On the 13th of August, the 3/20th Burma Rifles were transferred from Prome to Allanmyo and on the 1st of September the 2/20th Burma Rifles were sent from Rangoon to Pegu. The Burma Military Police had been used to the fullest extent from the outbreak of the rebellion. Their numbers were only 10,000 to which they had been reduced from 13,500 in 1924, and this left a very insufficient number available for active service in the rebel districts after manning all the Frontier posts and supplying the usual detachment for guards and escorts at district headquarters. Ten new companies totalling 1,100 men were raised early in 1931, but they were not fit for service till the end of the rains. By recalling the annual columns from unadministered territory on the North-East Frontier, by stopping leave and by taking every possible man from the headquarters of the different Battalions, about 1,600 men of the Military Police were at one time actually in the field. The Civil Police are not armed or trained for active service against rebels in the field, but their resources were strained to the utmost in dealing with the abnormal wave of crime which followed the rebellion, and they have on numerous occasions played a conspicuous part in encounters with the rebels. About 1,600 additional Civil Police were raised, mostly under the Police Act, 1869, at the expense of the inhabitants of the disaffected districts. Government also raised Irregular Levies, mainly of Karens and Chins, whose loyalty never wavered even in the darkest days. These Irregulars, who numbered at the end about 1,600, proved of great utility. Used to the climate and conditions, familiar with the countryside, they were readily adaptable to jungle fighting, and they soon proved themselves more than a match for the "*taungbawtha*." Thus reinforced, Government settled down to the laborious work of crushing out the rebellion, a task of very great difficulty, for it was necessary to take the aggressive in the jungle throughout the rains.

The regular Battalions which had been sent from India continued to operate into the early part of the year 1932, and were then gradually concentrated and withdrawn. The Manchester Regiment, the 2/5th Mahrattas, the 3/16th Punjabis and the 3/10th Baluchis with the H.Q. 12th Infantry Brigade and various ancillary units left for India during February and March.

### *The Amnesty and the Peace Mission.*

12. From the beginning of the rebellion the authorities realized that as regards culpability it was desirable to discriminate between the rebel rank and file, many of whom were guilty of but a very transient lapse into barbarism and the rebel organizers and leaders and the major criminals who flocked into the rebel ranks. It was obviously impossible to forgive the major rebels who had set an example of blood-thirsty cruelty and insatiable cupidity, the demoralizing effect of which will long be felt in the province. Government without betraying the interests of the mass of law-abiding people could not yield an inch to futile clamour to pardon the unpardonable.

Nevertheless, there was a keen desire to eschew vindictiveness and to finish the rebellion with as little loss of life to the country as possible. In pursuance of this policy the Local Government in July published an amnesty in Henzada, Prome, Thayetmyo, Insein and Tharrawaddy. In each of these districts, a list of rebel leaders to be excluded from the amnesty was compiled which was broadcasted with the amnesty notices. The amnesty was open to all other rebels for a month except those who had taken an active part in the murder of Government officials, Government servants and loyal villagers otherwise than in collision with the Troops or the Military Police. Government also reserved the right to prosecute those who had committed dacoity. The terms of the amnesty were broad and generous. Any misguided villager could return to respectability and freedom by surrendering. All he had to do was to sign an undertaking to live peaceably and not to join the rebels again or to harbour or assist them in any way and to give a full statement of the facts of the rebellion

within his knowledge. Except in Prome District however where the crushing rebel defeat at Wetto and the efforts of local well-disposed *pōngyis* had produced a marked but temporary effect the response was not encouraging. It seems that there were too many "*boks*" abroad terrorizing the villages with their nocturnal atrocities ; at this stage confidence in the power of Government to enforce its authority had by no means been restored. Thus in the middle of August the surrender figures were as follows :—

Prome	...	...	2,682
Tharrawaddy	...	...	261
Insein	...	...	227
Thayetmyo	...	...	399
Henzada	...	...	3

The Local Government therefore decided to give the rebel rank and file yet another chance and the time limit was extended. As however there were in August unmistakable indications of new risings it was stipulated that no indulgence would be granted to those who committed fresh acts of rebellion after September 1st. At the time it appeared unwise to let potential new rebels know in advance that they could expect soft treatment should their enterprises fail. At the end of November however when the new outbreaks which had eventuated were fairly well in hand even this stipulation was removed and moreover the new form of amnesty without a time limit was proclaimed in Pegu District.

13. The trend of the surrender movement is shown below :—

District.	July 15th	August 15th	September 15th	October 1st	November 1st	December 1st.	January 1st, 1932.
(1).	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Tharrawaddy ...	87	261	263	273	352	435	475
Prome ...	...	2,682	2,734	2,730	2,784	2,082	3,486
Thayetmyo ...	..	399	399	2,013	2,061	2,074	2,085
Henzada ...	...	3	5	5	6	12	15
Insein ...	...	227	249	250	252	286	302
Pegu ...	...	...	...	...	...	8	28
Total ...	87	3,572	3,650	5,271	5,455	5,617	6,391

At the beginning of March 1932 the total had risen to 6,905.

Although the rebels were slow to avail themselves of the amnesty offer there can be no doubt that the existence of this open door accelerated the collapse of the rebellion movement, after the relentless pressure of Government forces had taken effect ; moreover, it afforded the Buddhist priesthood an opportunity of undoing some of the terrible mischief in which a section of it had been so long involved.

#### *The Work of the Peace Mission.*

14. In Prome some *pōngyis* were active in preaching peace and surrender and one old blind *pōngyi* was brutally murdered by the rebels because he had opposed the rebel movement. In June a group of influential Rangoon *pōngyis* under the leadership of the Aletawya Sayadaw Aggamahapandita came to appreciate something of the horror which had been let loose in Burma and felt a genuine desire to co-operate with Government in bringing about a pacification as soon as possible. The "Burma for the Burman's League" acted as an intermediary between Government and those *pōngyis*. Saya Sein, T.P.S., Honorary Magistrate, Saya Myo, A.M.P., U Thaung Tin, and later U Maung Gyi, T.P.S., K.I.H., Honorary Magistrate, did most useful work in organizing the peace mission of the Rangoon Sayadaws. Visits were arranged to various centres where conferences were held with the district Sayadaws and local peace missions were formed, the object of which was to bring the influence of the priesthood to bear against rebellion and to induce

as many rebels as possible to surrender under the amnesty. Two visits were paid to Tharrawaddy District, one in July and one early in August. The local priesthood was tackled at Tharrawaddy, Minhla, Letpadan and Thônzè. The mission went to Taikkyi on August 18, and worked in Henzada and Ingabu from September 7th to September 10th. On September 29th the mission started on a long tour to Prome, Thayetmyo, Allannmyo, Kama and Paungdè. In October when the southern part of Prome District was in a turmoil Saya Sein and U Thaung Tin went to Paungdè and to a jungle *pôngyi kyaung*, where they attended a mass meeting and forcefully explained the futility and wickedness of rebellion. Later on when the Paunggyi valley outbreak occurred in Insein District (Hlegu Township) peace meetings were arranged at Hlegu and Paunggyi.

*Special Commissioner, Civil Intelligence Officer, Propaganda Officer.*

15. On June 26th a Special Commissioner and a Civil Intelligence Officer were appointed to co-ordinate all the various departmental activities at work in connection with the rebellion.

With the help of the Emergency Powers Ordinance, 1931, which was promulgated on August 1st, the newspapers were brought to heel and something was achieved in countering the seditious propaganda which permeated at least the Pegu and Irrawaddy Divisions, by broadcasting leaflets, handbills and posters. Arrangements were made to give the press a full supply of authentic rebellion news which for several months, until the Burma Round Table Conference superseded the rebellion, filled up the columns and replaced noxious matter without necessitating the use of the Ordinance.

The Ordinance expired on February 1st, 1932, and the offices of the Special Commissioner, Civil Intelligence Officer and Propaganda Officer were all closed down in the same month.

## FURTHER COURSE OF THE REBELLION.

### *Thayetmyo District.*

16. Till about the end of May the rebellion, though it was confined to Kama and the southern parts of Thayetmyo and Mindon townships, was in its most intense phase. In spite of the heavy casualties inflicted on the rebels at Ton, Yenatha, Mezali and elsewhere, the rebels still believed in the efficacy of their magic and recognized the authority of their leaders. Rebel prestige was inflated by numerous village raids in which little or no resistance was offered, and the Government forces were numerically too small to afford protection over such a large area and to counteract the rebel terrorism by widespread demonstrations of power. In this affected area, the District Superintendent of Police had at his disposal such of the post strength of Thayetmyo and Magwe as could be spared and a number of Special Constables reinforced later by extra Military Police, including a troop of Mounted Infantry and a Company of the 2/15th Punjabis. The Punjabis were relieved by part of the 3/20th Burma Rifles early in May, and more Military Police Infantry were gradually drafted into the district. In June, the second phase of the rebellion opened with more intensive operations in the original rebel area. One result of this was that rebel leaders took to marauding expeditions into the north of the district. The usual *modus operandi* was for a small party accompanying a leader to dacoit a number of villages north of the Mindon road and return with the spoil to headquarters. These expeditions were facilitated by the nature of the country, which may be described as a series of ranges of forest-clad hills, extending from the Irrawaddy westward to the Arakan Yomas. Rebel recruiting was also done and met with some success in areas which had not been visited by troops and where the news of the heavy rebel casualties in the south had not penetrated. Local dacoit gangs were formed at several places in Mindon, Thayetmyo and Minhla townships. The imminent danger was that disorder would spread north into Minbu District, a possibility which had to be prevented at all costs. During this second phase of the rebellion, Regular

Troops and Military Police including the Mounted Infantry worked desperately hard but it became obvious that more troops were required. The whole of Thayetmyo Subdivision was in a disturbed state, and rebel attacks on villages on the Allanmyo side of the river were of frequent occurrence.

17. The third phase began when the 12th Infantry Brigade took over charge in the beginning of August. The troops employed in order of arrival were :—

Four extra troops of Mounted Infantry.

The 3/16th Punjab Regiment.

Two companies of the 1/17th Dogra Regiment.

These troops were stationed in posts along Minbu border.

No. 14 Company Q.V.O. Sappers and Miners.

A Company of the 1st K.G.O. Madras Pioneers.

The 3/6th Rajputana Rifles.

These were employed partly on the Allanmyo side.

A Company of the Manchester Regiment,

The 4th Divisional Signal Wireless Telegraph Section,

and from September 10th to October 22nd a Cable Section also.

The 28th Field Ambulance.

No. 3, Indian General Hospital.

No. 17, A.T. Company, I.A.S.C.

The 43rd Supply Issue Section, I.A.S.C.

Chin Irregulars, originally 30 strong, were later increased in number. Now started a period of steady pressure over large areas. The "cleaning up" operations started with the establishment of Military posts in the North. Ten posts of from 35 to 70 men were maintained or new ones established in other parts of Thayetmyo Subdivision and also in Allanmyo. The object of the posts was to provide patrols to strike, and to strike quickly, at any collected gang of rebels before it could break up. The Rajputana Rifles, the Punjabis, the Dogras and the Burma Military Police engaged in active patrol work in all weathers, thus spreading an impression of the ubiquity of Government forces and frequently surprising the rebels, whose morale could not stand up to such persistent harassing. The rebel leaders consequently abandoned the plan of occupying large secret camps whence they could terrorise adjacent neighbourhoods and began to move about in small parties in order to avoid the attention of the troops. This was a momentous change and profoundly affected the attitude of the ordinary villagers towards the rebels. It meant that the rebels appeared no longer to the villagers as the dread hidden rulers of the district, ever ready to levy what money they required and to punish with death any who sided with Government; they now appeared more as hunted fugitives, hustled from one hiding place to another. As a result information of the movements of the small gangs began to come in, and they were rounded up from time to time. By the end of August the backbone of the rebellion seemed to snap with surprising suddenness. About 1,500 of the rank and file of the rebels surrendered, bringing in their fighting *dahs* and their pipe guns, which were almost as common in the district as cooking pots, showing the scale of the rebel preparations.

18. The work done by the posts in the Minhla township was completed during the period 10th September to 13th October by two columns :—a western column consisting of the 3/6th Rajputana Rifles, a detachment of the 14th Field Company Q.V.O. Madras Sappers and Miners and two troops of mounted Military Police, and an eastern column consisting of two platoons of the 3/16th Punjab Regiment, a detachment of the 14th Field Company Q.V.O. Madras Sappers and Miners and two troops of mounted Military Police. These two columns moved slowly and relentlessly in parallel lines from the north as far as the Thayetmyo-Mindon Road. They halted at various points for a week or more and during these halts smaller forces were sent out in all directions visiting and revisiting villages. Moreover, a company of the 2nd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment co-operated with the Eastern Column from launches on the river Irrawaddy. The fact that nearly every village was visited over a very large area showed the villagers that they were not immune from visits by

troops and that troops were available for these visits. Demonstrations of the power of the Lewis gun, rifle fire and grenades were frequently given to villagers, many of whom had never before seen Government forces and modern weapons of precision. The results were further surrenders and the capture of rebels and their arms and the breakup of local dacoit gangs. These operations accomplished the threefold object given to the forces by the commander of the 12th Infantry Brigade, *viz.*, to prevent the rebellion from spreading northward; to restore confidence in the civil population; to suppress rebellion finally in the north of Thayetmyo Subdivision.

19. Meantime the Irrawaddy was actively patrolled and rebel expeditions to the Allanmyo side were made increasingly difficult until they finally stopped. Some of the rebel leaders were killed or captured and U Arthapa *alias* Saya Nyan had a narrow escape from the Rajputana Rifles. The killing of his brother, Po Htaik, one of the most important rebel leaders, by the Chin Irregulars on September the 27th had a great effect. By the 13th of October of the 27 important rebel leaders 9 had been accounted for.

20. Similar "cleaning up" operations started in the south of the Thayetmyo Subdivision on October the 20th. The withdrawal of the Dogras from Thayetmyo District in the middle of October necessitated the abandonment of all but three of the posts in the north, but this risk was taken as it was desired to concentrate on the southern operations. Further pressure exerted in the south resulted in the surrenders of more rebel leaders and of a number of dacoit leaders of almost equal importance. Saya Nyan had another narrow escape and lost the company of his wife, who, having contracted malaria, had to come in for medical treatment. By the 6th of November, 11 more important leaders had been accounted for, and throughout November the district was being stripped of arms. The Allanmyo Subdivision on the east side of the Irrawaddy was for some time subject to raids by the Prome rebels, but before long these were partly checked. The district had been through a terrible ordeal of terrorism. It had been familiarised with all the horrors of rebel dacoity and extortion; cruel murders, abductions for ransom and other varieties of outrage had been the order of the day; but in two months of concentrated effort the pacification of most of the district had been achieved, and normal civil administration was rapidly restored. The leader, U Arthapa *alias* Saya Nyan, finally surrendered to the Police at Kama on the 19th December.

#### *Tharrawaddy District.*

21. In Tharrawaddy District the constant activity of troops, police and Karen irregulars gradually reduced the opportunities for plundering raids. Throughout the rains the Government forces were ceaselessly employed in raids, rounding up of villages and patrolling. Rebels' relatives and sympathisers were either brought into carefully prepared concentration camps at Minhla and Tharrawaddy or were dealt with under section 20 of the Village Act. Whereas formerly it often happened that loyal villagers were persecuted by the rebels, while pro-rebels seemingly enjoyed security, it now became more and more apparent that to feed and harbour rebels was a dangerous game to play. Moreover, a lively fear was instilled into the rebels of early dawn surprises and death or capture. As they became less enterprising their lives became more uncomfortable, since they had to keep more and more to the wet and malarious jungle. In June there were 64 important crimes (excluding murders), but in July came a sharp drop to 30 and this drop continued to 16 in August and 13 in September. The rise to 27 in October was in sympathy with the renewal of disorder in Prome District. The district was clearly steadying up. Slowly the surrender figures crept up from 87 in July, 261 in August, 263 in September, 273 in October, 352 in November to 475 by the end of December. The principal events in this long-drawn out process of attrition will be outlined. On September 16th, Po Hmu *alias* Mutu was captured with two of his followers at Nyaungbinzin, 12 miles north-east of Letpadan. This man had originally been a colleague of Shan Htu's but had quarrelled with the latter over a girl whom Po Hmu had abducted. The unfortunate girl was shot in the course of the quarrel. Po Hmu set up as an independent leader. His career was particularly black with crime. It is known that in the villages

under his influence, he was in the habit of taking any woman who struck his fancy. On September 22nd, Nga Aung Gyaw, a proclaimed rebel with Rs. 250 on his head, was arrested by the police in Sinnakwa village. Early in October the brothers Pan Chein and Pan Sein of Onbinzu gave themselves up with a musket and 51 rounds of ammunition. On October 23rd, a severe blow was struck at San Htu. Information was received that San Htu had a camp near Seinkanlan, 9 miles north-east of Tharrawaddy, and a most successful raid was carried out. San Htu himself escaped, but his second-in-command Chitti, guilty of many murders, was among the killed. Altogether 5 of San Htu's men were killed and 2 were captured, while 6 shot guns, 2 rifles and a large quantity of ammunition were seized. On the 19th of October the Prome rebels attempted an incursion into the Nattalin area in the North of Tharrawaddy District, but they were encountered and heavily defeated near the Singale Forest Reserve by the Karen Irregulars. This defeat turned a large gang of Prome rebels back into their original area where they shortly afterwards met their doom. About the same time Myat Aung's organization started to disintegrate. His lieutenant "Boh" Tha Byaw and 31 others surrendered with a double-barrel gun and fighting *dahs*. This batch included no less than 5 listed rebel leaders. "Boh" Myat Aung himself retreated with a handful of followers into the depths of the jungle and decided to try his luck in the Pegu River Valley. There, however, on the 20th of November they were surprised by a party of Military Police and suffered further casualties. Finally, on December 8th, the dead body of one of the last of Saya San's inner circle, the *ex*-soldier, San Htu, was brought in, and it only remained to clean up the remnants of the regular gangs, to prevent incursions from Prome District and firmly to resume as soon as possible the normal work of administration.

This work proceeded through the first months of 1932; in January there was a temporary set-back owing to an attempt to start a new rising in Zigon Subdivision, which had hitherto been comparatively unaffected. This was rapidly put down, and the leader, Shan Byu, one of Saya San's original lieutenants, was captured on February 17th. The attempt, however, showed that secret plans for fresh risings could still be made and that numbers of villagers could still be found to join in such outbreaks.

Myat Aung himself finally surrendered in April.

#### *Insein District.*

22. In Insein District, the later stages of the rebellion resembled the course of events in Tharrawaddy, except that an entirely new rising in the Paunggyi valley north of Hlegu started in August. Northward from Hlegu there stretches a long narrow valley flanked with jungle, which at its northern end is in contact with densely wooded hill country on the west, while on the east not far away lies the watershed between it and the Upper Pegu river valley. All through the early stages of the rebellion, the valley had been entirely undisturbed, but in August the authorities suddenly discovered that from Wagyaung in the extreme north down to Paunggyi and even south towards Hlegu the population was seething and simmering with all the symptoms preliminary to a rising. This was all directly due to the arrival of rebel Sayas and the active employment of the usual methods of excitation which rarely fail to impress Burman villagers. Fortunately the district authorities received timely information. Early in September, a column marched northwards up the valley and soon established contact with the rebel movement. The villages of Ohnebin and Mweni were surprised and rounded up on September 11th. Twenty-seven arrests were made in Ohnebin where the surprise was complete, but at Mweni where the rebels were gathered together, 50 strong, in a final palaver before getting down to business, the advancing troops were observed, and most of the rebels escaped under cover of dense plantain gardens. Visibility was too bad for effective fire, but a ringleader was shot in flight. The moral effect of this operation was felt throughout the length of the valley, and seditious enthusiasm began to wane. But there were those who had committed themselves too far for an early return to grace, and until their hidden camps had been rooted out there were grounds for anxiety. In October the District Superintendent of Police was directing operations at the upper end of the

valley, north of Mweni and Ohnebin, when he received information that a large camp was located on a precipitous hill called Pyaswe, about four miles north of the Karen village of Kyauksayitkon. Here the rebel forces had been concentrated. There were the fugitives from the Mweni raid and, only just before, another gang of rebels had marched up *via* Kyauksayitkon, on their way wantonly murdering in the fields a man and two women, one of whom had an infant at her breast. The District Superintendent of Police and his men found the stronghold and pushed boldly up the steep side of the hill in single file along the only possible jungle path. They surprised the rebel look-outs, shot one of them and rushed the summit. The whole assembly of rebels flung themselves in panic down another semi-precipitous side of the hill where, according to information, several of them were injured and killed on the rocks below. On the top the District Superintendent of Police's men captured large supplies of food and other material. Even after this success there were still savage and desperate characters at large in the jungle. Two messengers were sent up to Wagyauung to announce the *Sayadaws'* peace mission meeting fixed for October the 16th. On their return the messengers were surprised. One escaped after being severely wounded while the other was dragged away and hacked to pieces. In the early hours of October 15th, Irregulars led by a Sub-Inspector of Police, out after Saya Sein Maung and this gang, succeeded in quietly surrounding a large temporary camp. At break of day the place was shot up. Six rebels were killed, six were arrested and many others were wounded. Among the prisoners was Saya Sein Maung's second-in-command. After this, it soon became possible to crush out the remains of the rebellion. Over a hundred arrests were effected, but it was found possible to release the majority of these after the crisis was passed. Most of them were misguided rustics who had not had time to become more deeply involved in the rebellion than drinking charmed oil and eating charmed pork.

23. All this time Government forces had been steadily wearing down the rebel veterans of Taikkyi Subdivision. As in other districts the ubiquity of Government forces, the vigorous measures taken against pro-rebel villagers on whom the rebels relied for food, shelter and information, soon removed all the attractiveness from the rebel way of life, and the main gangs began to split up and to shrink with deaths, captures and desertions. The mainstays of rebellion were the Aung Shwe-Aung Pe group in the riverine tract and "Boh" Aw's gang in the highlying jungle north of Paukkon and in the Hlaing River neighbourhood. On October the 1st, "Boh" Tun Baw, who had split off from the Aung Shwe gang, was arrested with his arms in the Tawlate area. Meanwhile the main Aung Shwe gang was harried from pillar to post. Early in November he lost the double-barrel gun he had obtained when he murdered Sub-Inspector of Police Maung Ba Sein in Henzada District and a considerable quantity of ammunition. The villagers began to show signs of being tired of feeding him and giving him money. His immediate following ultimately dwindled until he had only one man left. Then his temporary camp between Be-in-daw and Yenetin in the *kaing* jungle was raided. He and his men escaped, but he had to leave so hurriedly that he lost more ammunition. Finally his last man deserted on November the 11th and at the same time brought in two double-barrel guns and ammunition. Aung Shwe had now to play a lone hand. He decided to pay a visit to Rangoon where he thought he could hide comfortably and spend enjoyably some of his ill-gotten gains. By a lucky chance he was recognized in a bus by a fellow passenger, and when the bus fortunately broke down near Taikkyi, he was arrested on November 16th. "Boh" Aw had been compelled to lie low for some little time, but in November he decided to try and join up with Myat Aung. On his way to Myat Aung's camp he heard the sound of firing. He was informed that some of Myat Aung's men were letting off their ammunition prior to surrender, so he hurried back to his own hiding place. On the whole, a far better atmosphere prevailed in Insein District by the end of 1931. The vast majority of the people were thoroughly wearied of the rebellion and, particularly in the Paunggyi valley, there were manifest indications of sincere repentance. Pent up in the jungle "Boh" Aw had no future before him, and could get no fresh recruits. Elsewhere it remained to deal with Aung Shwe's brother, Aung Pe, and the scattered members of Aung Shwe's gang.

*Pegu District.*

24. In Pegu District also there was a fresh rising, and it was of a peculiar nature. It did not occur in the area naturally adapted for rebellion and disorder, namely the Upper Pegu River Valley, but in the middle of the settled paddy plain of the Nyaunglebin subdivision west of the railway line in the Daiku area. The leaders, Saya Chit and Yan Gyi Aung, had already come to the notice of the police in June in connection with the communal friction which had happily died down. These two men had imbibed a weird new superstition, the cult of the sun and the moon, from a *pôngyi* named U Okkantha, a well-known charlatan and formerly an associate of the Shwebo rebel, Bandaka, residing in Myothit township, Magwe District. Besides his novel doctrine, the *pôngyi* imparted a new recipe for invulnerability, not only to Saya Chit and Yan Gyi Aung but also to other admirers from Pegu District. He gave them charmed ash and directed them to concentrate their minds on the sun and the moon. He also gave them oath water, their undertaking being to murder every non-Buddhist. Replete with all this spiritual refreshment, the two leaders returned to their own district where they succeeded in convincing some 30 men that they had the secret of success and the world at their feet. Having formed an association called the "Padi" or rosary *athin*, a feature of which was the wearing of a Buddhist rosary round the neck, they launched a little side-show rebellion. Fortunately this was staged in an area full of loyal gun-holders. On September the 23rd, the gang descended on Tazaung village where a foul murder was committed. The headman of the neighbouring village of Shweindon, hearing of this, called together 12 gun-holders and went straight to the attack. The gang was utterly routed, 7 being shot dead and 20 arrested. The victory was decisive and the career of the Padi *athin* came to an abrupt end.

25. In the Upper Pegu River Valley, the rebel movement dragged on its weary course month after month, but with steadily diminishing vitality; the comparatively restricted area to plunder, coupled with the promptitude and persistence of Government operations, afforded no scope for such sudden revivals as occurred elsewhere. For some time the rebels were able to hold the villages in fee from their concealed strongholds. As in other areas, their systematic exactions, called *sitsayeik* or war costs, are recorded on captured documents and reveal reserves of ready cash in the villages surprisingly large having regard to the plea of rural famine incessantly urged by the Burmese press in its clamour for wholesale indulgence. From time to time moreover the rebels attempted to quell the growing confidence in Government by cruel murders. However, in spite of the difficulties of the monsoon season, the initiative passed to the Government forces who scoured the jungle unremittingly and thus kept the rebels on the run from one hiding place to another.

26. Early in the morning, on September 9th, a small party of Military who had been out on patrol all night came face to face with a rebel gang on a narrow jungle track. Firing started on both sides, but the rebels fled almost at once with several wounded. They left behind them much of their gear including ammunition and account book. The next day a small party of four rebels was hotly chased and one was shot down. On September 11th, a rebel gun was captured near Natset. On September 15th, the Military Police had the good fortune to find and exterminate the main leader, Tun Way, and his brother-in-law Po Chit, at Shwegwe village near Tandawgyi. A new camp under construction was found and destroyed on September 12. The Karen Irregulars started to score successes in October. They captured two rebels on October 1st and rounded up six shortly afterwards. About this time the Pegu rebels became very depressed. They had lost their chief leader, Tun Way, and they had also lost a lesser light, Bo Nyi Aung. They sent across to Myat Aung on the other side of the Yomas and offered Rs. 1,500 for the loan of one of his veterans. Saya Kyin was sent across, but apparently did not find the area to his liking. He returned after pocketing his transfer fee, of which he sent Rs. 1,000 to his wife much to Myat Aung's disgust.

27. On November 9th, a column managed to surprise a gang of 30 rebels in camp at a place called Seyobin just as they were about to make one of their

interminable moves. The camp was rushed and 2 rebels were killed on the spot and at least 5 were wounded. A large quantity of ammunition and other materials was seized. Later on November 20th, a party of Military Police surprised a gang in their camp not far from Sinsakan. Most of the rebels managed to slip away into the jungle, but at least one was killed. Four pucca guns, 112 rounds of ammunition and a box of blasting powder fell into the hands of the troops. Two days later, a party of Irregulars from Zaungtu had a skirmish with "Boh" Tun Myat's gang in the Mahuya valley. Two rebels were killed and one was captured and Tun Myat's two elephants were also seized. At this stage despair seems to have fallen on the now wearied rebels. By the end of November there were 8 surrenders, which rose to 28 during December and to 63 by the beginning of March 1932. A deserted camp of 15 huts in the Pyinmachaung valley was destroyed on November 29th, and on the same day another rebel camp was rushed and destroyed, one of the rebels being wounded and captured. Yet another camp at a place west of Kyetpaung, Maung Sakan was found and destroyed on December 2nd. Operations continued through January and February 1932, in conjunction with the Tharrawaddy and Insein officials to dispose of the remaining gangs who had taken refuge in the Pegu Yomas, and were still in progress in the month of March.

#### *Henzada District.*

28. In June and July chaos was at its zenith in the Ingabu, Henzada and Zalun Townships. As may be seen from the statement in paragraph 15 there were 142 important crimes in June and 103 in July and of course, the majority of these were nocturnal dacoities, directly or indirectly connected with the rebellion. The Civil Police was swamped and routine crime investigation practically ceased. As for the rebels, their original bombastic notions of waging open war on the Government receded into the background. Dacoity became for a space a thriving business. Loot was the prime object of the rebels. Deeds of horrible cruelty won the respectful admiration of large numbers of villagers, and, although here and there cases of gallant resistance occurred, for the most part the rebels had it all their own way. The principal leaders were "Boh" Way, Anti and Pe Bu, in one group, Aung Din on his own, and besides these, the redoubtable Aung Shwe-Aung Pe gang from the Insein side frequently toured in Henzada. "Boh" Way, Anti and Pe Bu soon discovered that money was to be had for the mere asking and they set themselves energetically to squeeze the villagers. Few places in the disturbed tract were exempt from the visits of the agents of "Boh" Way-Anti-Pe Bu group, and most villages hastened to buy exemption from dacoity by paying up the contribution levied upon them. Father Revoir, the Catholic priest at Danbi, a large railway village, recounts how every other night would be disturbed by a gun shot or some commotion and he would be told that this was Anti's men speeding up the satisfaction of their demands. At one time Anti was in possession of wealth estimated at over Rs. 30,000. Thus with crime seemingly triumphant, it is not surprising that villagers hesitated for long to show any pro-government leanings. The task of the Baluchis was to tackle an intangible foe and to enable the Civil Police to get to work again. In August the state of the district began slowly to improve. The better elements in the villages were finding the yoke of the rebel dacoits intolerably heavy and village resistance began to stiffen. On August 3rd, a gang of rebels attacked a house in Letanng village and started to enforce a demand for Rs. 6,000 by various forms of torture, but the villagers turned out in a body. The dacoits were hotly pursued, part of their loot was recovered, five were wounded and one of their number was killed. On August 2nd, an attack on Zigon village was beaten off after a stout defence. Both the quality and quantity of information improved with the result that on August 23rd the Police were able to anticipate a dacoity at Ingabu Daga village, and inflicted a sharp reverse on the criminals. Similarly a Police party waited for dacoits in Tabinyin village and succeeded in breaking them up with a telling volley. On September 13th a gang of dacoits assembling in Hnemauktan village was successfully rounded up and the

next day " Boh " Aung Din and two of his lieutenants were surprised in Yogyi Kyeiksongwin village. Aung Din escaped, but one of his lieutenants was captured with some of Aung Din's gear.

29. In September and October the laborious work of wearing down the rebel dacoits went on and, at the same time, symptoms of rebel ferment spreading received prompt attention. The amnesty was practically ignored by the rebels, and at the end of December only 15 had surrendered. The number increased to 83 at the beginning of March 1932. Dacoity and extortion had unfortunately proved too profitable to be given up abruptly. However, on October 8th, a signal success was achieved when " Boh " On Bwin, the local curse of the Yele area, was captured with his two followers Nay Win and *Pôngyi* U Thondara *alias* Maung Paik. On the same date, moreover another of On Bwin's followers surrendered. In spite of a savage attack on October 14th, when 10 rebels broke into Baikyo Tawgwin village, Apyauk area, murdered two inmates, mutilated two others and dragged away a fifth as a hostage, the temper of the villagers continued to improve. On October 22nd another notorious " Boh " was disposed of, Nyi Gyi being shot dead at Kyatgyi in the Thabaw area. On October 26th the " Boh " Way-Anti-Pe Bu combination sustained a heavy loss in the death of Pe Bu. The special department of this partner in the infamous firm was terrorist murder, while " Boh " Way and Anti devoted most of their attention to accumulating plunder. He had been known while returning from a murderous exploit casually to drop down an unconcerned passerby whom he met on the road—his was a name to conjure with among the awe-stricken villagers. This potentate dropped in at Letpanhla, only three miles north of Leikchaung police-station and imposed a contribution on the village. The headman managed to arrange a later date for payment, and in the interval, went into headquarters, obtained three Government guns and smuggled these out to his village. Punctual to his appointment, Pe Bu turned up on October 26th to collect the village contribution, only to meet with a totally unexpected and shattering reception. He and three of his murder gang were shot dead. About the same time a local leader who had given much trouble in the Konbyin and Lemyethna areas, one Nga Talok Gyi, gave himself up. By the beginning of November, 11 rebel dacoit leaders had been put out of action. A raid on Magyibinkwin, in the Neikban area, deprived " Boh " Aung Din of three of his followers, and on December 3rd a gang of rebels from Kadoseik in Yele area, former followers of the captured Aung Shwe, was ambushed by the troops while cruising on the river near Lamaing and practically wiped out.

30. Thus although the course of rebel-dacoit suppression in Henzada District can show but little that is spectacular, the methods employed—constant patrolling by night and day, village roundups and immediate action on information—undoubtedly proved effective. The great reduction in village crime since the terrible days of June and July was a measure of the success which had been achieved in breaking the power of the rebel dacoit and restoring confidence in the administration. The villagers knew, as they did not know before, which side was bound to win, and complete pacification was only a question of time.

Pe Bu was killed on December 26th, and Anti, the worst dacoit leader in the district, on January 12th, and these successes assisted in the restoration of normal conditions. Boh Way was finally run down and killed by the Insein Police in April.

### *Prome District.*

31. In Prome the first conflagration was in the northern part of the district. It was there that the rebels were decisively defeated time and again by numerically inferior Government parties, the most notable defeat being the fight at Wetto on June 5th. At first it seemed that the Prome rebel movement was to collapse as swiftly as it had arisen. In June, July and August the rebels came pouring in to surrender until by August 15th, 2,682 had availed themselves of the amnesty. Unlike the rebel collapse in Thayetmyo, however,

this surrendering was confined to the rank and file, and the major leaders held aloof. Another feature which justified anxiety was that the rebel firearms were not given up. Moreover, that village life was still profoundly disturbed was shown by the entirely abnormal wave of important crime ; in June, 73 of such crimes were reported against 7 in June 1930, in July 83 against 2 in July 1930, in August 64 against 1 in August 1930. It was significant also that this crime wave swept over the Paungdè Subdivision in the south of the district. Actually what was happening was that the rebellion was rapidly entering on the usual second phase which is indistinguishable from criminal anarchy. This was a hitherto undreamed of opportunity for the hardened criminal ; men who can only be described as the lowest of the low were everywhere assuming control. Saya Mya, the original Myoma Chief, was still at large and nominally supreme, but in reality his position was now no higher than that of *primus inter pares*. As far as can be ascertained, Saya Mya was no ordinary criminal before the rebellion. It is true he had been involved in a dacoity case and convicted by the lower court, but he was acquitted on appeal. On the whole he seems to have earned his living honestly as a timber contractor in Shwebo District and later as a paddy broker in Prome District. He was a man whose mind had become utterly possessed by virulent sedition. He was a thorough-going hater of the modern era and, in particular, of the modern Government. An unbalanced ego-maniac, he saw himself gloriously emerging from a barbaric welter of blood and destruction to the headship of a militant Buddhist Kingdom. His allies, however, were emphatically realists. Crime was their profession and plunder their objective ; to them the rebellion was the finest opening that had ever, or was ever likely to, come their way. Perhaps the most prominent was Chet Su, a well-known dacoit leader of the Hmattaing area. He and another of the same stamp, Pan Myaing, operated for the most part in the north of the district in the Paukkaung area and along the Allanmyo border. They combined forces about the end of November. Chet Su had many criminal *tabes*, or disciples, who soon started to set up independent businesses of their own in various parts of the district. These marauders had clear ideas on the economics of plunder, and realised that as by concentrating on one area, the local resources would become exhausted, it would therefore be more profitable to disperse and tap fresh tracts. Hla Maung and Nga Pyaw stayed in the northern part of the district, Okpo Po Saw fastened himself on the Thègôn township. Nga Hla of Weggi, formerly a famous dacoit who had twice escaped jail by turning approver, operated vigorously in the Paungdè Subdivision. Nyo Mya, an absconding dacoit from Insein, settled down in October in the Shwedaung hills between the Irrawaddy and the railway. In the Paungdè Subdivision, dacoity had so thriven that in August it expanded into the "tiger" and the "lion" armies. Both were led by *tabes* of Chet Su's. The tiger chief was Tun Maung and he was supported by an ancient ruffian called Shwe Yon who bore the nickname of "*Mokseik Sayagyi*," big bearded chief. The latter moved about in the background with his women folk who, so it is said took charge of the evergrowing accumulations of loot. The "lion army" was run by On Nyun, also of the Chet Su connection, and in this organization his authority was almost equalled by that of his colleague Aung Thin. Both the "lion" and the "tiger" armies were essentially dacoit gangs, but they were puffed up by successes, until no longer satisfied with ordinary village outrages, they entertained ambitious schemes of sacking the big places along the railway. In the villages there was widespread disloylty, but a large part of this was due to the customary Burman submission to the power that is thought to be the *force majeure*. As in other disturbed areas, the Prome villagers were inclined to tender their awed admiration towards the seemingly successful rebel dacoits. When it is borne in mind that in one week alone—the week ending September 28th—the Prome rebels obtained from the villagers property and cash valued at Rs. 21,000, it may seem strange that the mass of the villagers continued to submit to such tyranny. The explanation is that, on the whole, Burman villagers will put up with almost any amount of oppression when it is backed successfully by overwhelming force. Thus it was only later when the ultimate superiority of Government had been widely demonstrated that the villagers began to forsake their active or passive fealty to the rebel dacoits.

32. On the afternoon of September 24th, the "lion" and "tiger" trouble came to a head. A wild mob, 200 to 300 strong, attacked Padigon, which is on the railway line about 26 miles south of Prome, broke into the railway station and did considerable damage. There can be no doubt that they would have laid the whole town waste, but for the bravery of Miller U Po Yin and Police Inspector Kin Maung with his 12 constables. A detachment of 60 rebels bearing a flag approached the inspection bungalow where the Inspector was camped with the obvious intention of putting him and his men to death. When the Inspector coolly shot the leader, the ferocious excitement started to subside. The detachment retreated followed by the Inspector, Miller Po Yin and the policemen. Altogether 6 rebels were killed and the rest fled. Early on September 25th, three parties set out from Hmattaing in the direction in which the rebels had fled towards the hills lying to the east. One of the parties surprised some of the fugitives holding a meeting in the *pôngyi kyaung* at Konzin about 6 miles north-east of Hmattaing. Seventeen arrests, including two *pôngyis*, were effected and some of the loot of Padigon recovered. There were also seized a supply of rebel charms, rebel oaths and a list of subscribers to rebel funds. Some of the "lion" army fugitives retreated to Thaiktawma village near the railway line. On September 30th, a party of Civil and Military Police intercepted one of their messengers and from him discovered where the party was sojourning. Thaiktawma was at once attacked and there was a short brisk action in which 3 rebels were killed, 2 captured and several wounded. Among the dead was Sein Tin, an important lieutenant of On Nyun, the "lion" chief. Not long afterwards 22 other members of the "lion" army were captured. After this reverse the "lion" army lost a great deal of its prestige and many transferred themselves to the "tiger" army. Meanwhile the "tiger" army was still fairly confident. The "tiger" chief Tun Maung succeeded in keeping a fairly large following, about 50 strong, and moved about from village to village in the Paungdè Subdivision. But large numbers of the villagers in certain neighbourhoods were already beginning to doubt the invincibility of the rebel dacoits. About 400 villagers in the Thègôn neighbourhood who had paid subscriptions to the "tiger" and "lion" armies intimated their desire to surrender and a similar movement began in the Hmattaing area. The "tiger" army continued to move around in October, but it was still difficult to obtain information in time to catch up with them. One of their exploits, on October 21st was to attack Myogyi village, 5 miles south of Paungdè, their object being to slaughter all the relations of the wife of the Hmattaing Police Station Officer who were residing there. Fortunately a patrol arrived in time to disperse the would-be murderers. Just before this, however, the "tiger" army had been roving down south into the Nattalin area, Tharrawaddy District. They brought off an attack on Nyaunghla village and were retiring towards the Singale Forest Reserve when they were attacked by a party of Tharrawaddy Irregulars. In this skirmish the "tigers" received a severe blow. Two were wounded and captured and about 10 others, although they escaped, were put out of action by their wounds. This skirmish turned the "tiger" army back into their original area. They decided to camp in the Thayetkon *pôngyi kyaung*. On October 24th, however, information reached the authorities at Paungdè and on that very night the *kyaung* was surrounded. The rebels beat their gongs, shouted their magic incantations, threw local made bombs and opened fire on the Military, who replied with devastating effect. The "tiger" leader, Tun Maung and another Bo Po Yin, were among the 15 killed. The body of Nga Pyu of Thitpok, a rebel from the north, probably on a liaison visit, was also found. Another important leader, Ye Gyan, was among the prisoners. Thus this formidable "army" was practically wiped out at a blow. In the *pôngyi kyaung* was found a sum of Rs. 527 in cash, part of the so-called war funds collected or extorted from the villagers. A mishap marred the success as Lieutenant Waller was accidentally shot by one of his own men in the leg. The Thayetkon debacle gave a new impulse to the surrender movement. Fifty-five rebels gave themselves up on September 30th and by November 2nd, the district total of surrenders reached 2,784.

33. Meanwhile, although the Myoma Chief, Saya Mya, remained more or less quiescent, engaged in planning a mass attack on Wettigan Police-station and other grandiose schemes, the Paukkaung and the Paungdale areas and the

Prome-Allanmyo border suffered considerable disturbance, owing to the continued activities of Chet Su and Pan Myaing. The usual demoralization spread in the villages to such a degree that normally quiet well-behaved villagers began to take to violent crime on their own initiative. This is exemplified in an extraordinary dacoity which occurred on June 10th. It was carried out by a gang of 40 or 50 villagers recruited from the neighbourhood of Ngamwezin village, which is in Paukkaung township, about 12 miles south of Shwebandaw in the Allanmyo Subdivision. These villagers invaded Shwebandaw, abducted three people and held them for ransom, which was to be paid in cash and opium. It appears that this border raid was not a rebel manifestation, but a spontaneous outbreak of lawlessness inspired by the general feeling that the administration was dissolving. In this region there are some Chin villages just as loyal to the Government as the Karens. Their help was enlisted and readily given. Not only were Chin levies raised, but defence firearms were issued to some of the Chin villages. The rebels attempted to deal with the Chins in a spirit of savage vindictiveness, most terribly exemplified on October 17th when 50 rebels burnt down the village of Chingongyi, Allanmyo Township, and massacred every living soul found therein, man, woman and child. On the whole, however, the Chins asserted themselves most usefully on the Prome-Allanmyo border. Nevertheless on September 28th came the sack of Thitpok. The rebels brought this off by a ruse. They personated the police and approached the village, pretending to be bringing in two rebel prisoners. By this means they gained an entrance to the village which they burnt to the ground. On October 5th the outrage was avenged by the Chin Irregulars who, getting on the tracks of Nga Pyaw, surrounded Thapangaing village and captured 12 members of the gang. Shortly afterwards they secured another 3. Unfortunately the remnants of the gang believed that they had been betrayed by a certain surrendered rebel, and in revenge they promptly murdered his aged father. Feeling the steadily tightening pressure of Government forces, the rebel dacoits seemed to have been roused to the last extremes of cruelty. Twenty-five of them broke into Gyogya village, 2 miles south-east of Paukkaung on October 11th. They there slaughtered a little girl 6 years old and partially hacked up another aged 5. In another instance, on October 9th, a gang attacked Nwamyaw village, 48 miles south-east of Allanmyo, burnt down several houses, shot two villagers out of hand, seized four other villagers who were subsequently murdered in cold blood, caught the headman and burnt him alive. Their savage temper was also illustrated on October 6th when they managed to ambush 12 Chins in jungle in the Paukkaung area. Four of the Chins were shot down, whereupon the rebel dacoits amused themselves by hacking up the bodies and chopping off the heads. On October 23rd, a mixed Civil and Military Police patrol got in a blow at Nga Pyaw. Nga Pyaw himself just managed to escape, but two of his best men were killed and one was wounded and captured. From now on Nga Pyaw's star was definitely in the descendent. Some of his men surrendered; his colleague, San Gyi, was shot on the 27th of November and finally he gave himself up at the end of that month.

34. An unfortunate incident on October 19th appears to have given fresh heart to the rebels in the north part of the district. A mounted infantry troop from Shwebandaw (in the Allanmyo area) was ambushed in very thick jungle near Pauktaw. The leading man was wounded and the man behind him was thrown from his horse. The ambushers made off under heavy fire, but only one was killed. The fact that so many bullets missed them appears to have augmented the faith of the rebels in their invulnerability prescriptions, and this had the effect of postponing the mood of depression which precedes collapse. However, as the rebels were definitely beaten in Thayetmyo on the west side of the Irrawaddy in the course of September and October, it was possible to bring over the 3/6th Rajputana Rifles and three troops of the Burma Military Police Mounted Infantry across the river to Allanmyo. These troops were extended in posts across the Allanmyo Subdivision to the Yomas, and their line was gradually pushed southwards towards the Prome-Allanmyo border. Before long operations centred round Shwebandaw, so that the rebel dacoits found themselves between two fires for they were also subjected to pressure from the south

exerted by the forces in the northern part of the Prome District. At the beginning of November, the headquarters of the 12th Infantry Brigade were shifted from Mandalay to Prome and all through the month intensive operations all over the district were attended with substantial successes. The operations involved an immense amount of hard work owing to the extent of the affected areas. The troops had to be constantly on the move, patrolling, raiding, rounding up. Besides the losses inflicted on the rebels, the power of Government became manifest to the majority of the villagers and the rebel dacoits began to lose their hold on the population. Early in November the Peace Mission *Sayadaws* of the district had little difficulty in inducing some 4,700 villagers from 105 villages in the Paukkaung area to undertake to refrain from assisting the rebels in any way whatsoever, and in the south, in the Paungdè Subdivision a fairly widespread desire for a mass return to loyalty became evident. In November, 528 rebels gave themselves up to the Paungdè Police and by January 1st, the district total of surrenders had risen to 3,486, and at the beginning of March, 1932, the total was 3,795. Even Saya Mya became discouraged, for it is known that he issued instructions to the rebel dacoit leaders whom he considered his subordinates to disband temporarily until the troops had been removed from the district.

35. With their activities restricted and hampered at all points, the various rebel dacoit gangs seemed to become all the more prone to use the now fewer opportunities for crime to add further atrocities to their already black record. Ten rebels of the gang of Nyo Mya, who was infesting the Shwedaung hills, abducted and murdered a villager from Thabyegon. His decapitated body was subsequently discovered. On October 30th, Nyo Mya's gang, 50 strong, attacked Kathittaing in the Shwedaung area. At the headman's house there was some initial resistance, but when the house was set afire, three of the defenders came out and gave up their arms. As soon as they were helpless they were cut down and their bodies were thrown into the fire. It is some consolation that the villagers counter-attacked vigorously, drove off the dacoits and managed to kill two of them. On the night of November 17th, another gang of 15 attacked Yesokpin, 5 miles north of Padigon, chased the headman across the paddy fields and slew him. His dead body was found brutally mangled. On November 18th, Sindegon village, 3 miles north of Thègôn, was visited by 10 rebels who went straight to the house of a certain villager and shot him out of hand. At the same time, for no rhyme or reason, they inflicted wounds on his wife and daughter. But the Government mastery of the situation was by now so obvious that such revolting terrorism failed to restore to the rebel dacoits their former domination and to arrest the reviving confidence of the villagers in the administration. On November 24th, the Wettigan force rounded up Thabyebin village, and captured a notable rebel called Po Saw who had served under Chet Su as his second-in-command. On November 21st, the same force had captured a certain Bo Kala who had served under Saya Mya. On November 25th, Chet Su lost another of his lieutenants when Chitti surrendered to the Paungdè Police, and on the same day Okpo Po Saw lost two followers who also surrendered. Nga Hla sustained losses on November 24th. His gang attacked a village close to Padigon where the noise of the dacoity was heard. A party set out to the rescue, pursued the retreating dacoits, and captured three of the gang. On November 29th, a force from Thègôn rounded up five of Nyo Mya's gang and six of the same gang were captured by the Sinmizwe and Thègôn platoons early in December. Nga Hla had a very close shave on December the 3rd when he was just leaving a village after collecting contributions. A platoon of Regulars turned up and he had to run for it under fire. He escaped, but he lost a follower with his cash collections and some of his ammunition. On December 6th "Boh" Kin Gyi, another disciple of Chet Su's, was surprised and shot with two companions near Kyatna, two miles north of Sinmizwe, while on this same day of good fortune, 16 rebels surrendered on the Prome-Paukkaung Road with a veritable armoury of firearms and ammunition, including a revolver and musket lost at Myoma when Mr. Austin, District Superintendent of Police, was murdered; and, furthermore Okpo Po Saw surrendered with the whole of his gang—12 men with four guns and ammunition. Finally Chet Su himself surrendered on December 17. Nyo Mya and

On Nyun, the two leading *bohs* of the "Lion Army" were killed on the 24th and 27th December; early in January Pan Myaing surrendered, and finally on the 31st January Po Hla Gyi, one of the most brutal of all the dacoit leaders, was shot by armed villagers, and two of his sons shared the same fate three weeks later. With the break up of these gangs normal conditions were almost restored. The only prominent leader unaccounted for was Saya Mya who had not been heard of for some months and was supposed to have left the district.

## ON THE FRINGE OF REBELLION.

### *Bassein District.*

36. After the swift and timely action taken by the Bassein authorities in May and June there was a period of quiescence, but it was hardly to be expected that with Henzada still in confusion fresh attempts would not be made to disturb the district. Up to October the administration worked smoothly and excellent progress was made with revenue collection. That the disposition of the greater part of the district was loyal was evidenced by the fact that the authorities had no difficulty in obtaining early information of impending risings. Thus on October 11th the Deputy Commissioner and District Superintendent of Police swooped down on a little nest of sedition in the Ngathainggyaung area. In three villages Ledi, Ngadetsu and Daiktiya Kanna, numerous arrests were made. Rebel tattooing had been in full swing and there were seized a "galon" flag, charms and other paraphernalia for deluding and exciting ignorant villagers. On October 14th troops and civil police successfully rounded up a couple of villages on the west bank of the Ngawun midway between Ngathainggyaung and Thabaung. On October 18th Bwengu was raided and seven days later 18 freshly tattooed absconders gave themselves up. On October 24th, 7 freshly tattooed suspects were arrested at Inshe, four miles south of Ngathainggyaung. Two villages five miles north-east of Thabaung were surprised with the result that 16 tattooed suspects were arrested including the ringleader and tattooer, *Pôngyi* U Nyanaranda. Information was obtained that a large-scale rising had been planned which would have embraced many villages in the Ngathainggyaung, Thabaung, Yegyi, Athok and Kangyidaung areas. It was found that in the Attaung area villagers had started to make cash contributions to a secret rebel war fund. Seditious "tabaungs" or prophecies were current in the Kyônpyaw Subdivision foretelling the approaching end of the existing regime. These effusions were passed from hand to hand and as elsewhere had an almost hypnotic effect in unsettling the minds of the villagers and swamping the last vestiges of common-sense. Rebel emissaries with the usual magic equipment visited the district on mischief bent. One of these, Pauk Tu, a denizen of the Myanaung area in Henzada District, was caught at Attaung. Besides a stock of magic articles he had a supply of rebel pamphlets. Another tattooer from Myanaung was also arrested after a raid on November 6th on three villages to the east of Ngathainggyaung. A raid on Chaungson and Tetseik north-west of Ngathainggyaung on November 2nd again quelled a rebel ferment and the tattooer responsible was arrested. Zigôn and Kyaungbagon in the Thibawgyin area were satisfactorily dealt with on the same lines. The civil police arrested four suspects at Gyogyawin village 8 miles north-east of Kangyidaung and seized ammunition, charms and implements for tattooing and for counterfeiting coins, a medley typical of the intimate association of rebellion and ordinary crime. News was received that a rising had been planned for November 24th in certain villages on the Henzada-Bassein border, about 12 miles north-west of Attaung. A surprise raid found and broke up a local conspiracy. Twenty-eight freshly tattooed men were arrested including the ringleader. Meantime two hardened criminals, *Pôngyi* Sami and Shwe Tin, ever with an eye to the main chance, got together a gang of dacoits between 20 and 30 strong and started to operate on the Maubin-Bassein border. This gang perpetrated a dacoity on November 22nd at Kanyingaing in the Attaung area, and on November 30th they dacoited a Chinaman's house, in

Teikywa village, 6 miles south-east of Kyõnpyaw. However, on December 6th a combined force of Regulars, Irregulars and Civil Police rounded up six villages to the south-east of Kyõnpyaw, in connection with the Teikywa dacoity, captured 12 suspects and 11 supporters of the gang. Shortly afterwards on December 8th and 9th, eight other villages were raided at night and 17 more suspects were arrested. Thus throughout the difficult and dangerous period in 1931, thanks to the vigilance of the district authorities and the accurate information always obtainable at the right moment, the rebel movement never had an opportunity to make a real start and the district was spared the horrors of a fully matured rising. Important crime was abnormal, but this was an inevitable repercussion of rebellion ; it never got out of hand. Thus in May there were 16 important crimes, in June 34, in July 20,—serious enough considering that in 1930 there were in May only 3, in June 4, in July, 1, but afterwards there were in August only 9, in September, 7, and in October, 5.

### *Maubin District.*

37. Maubin District was just as exposed as Bassein to noxious influences emanating from Henzada and from the disturbed tracts to the east across the river. From the main centres of trouble ripples of disorder spread across this ordinarily quiet and well-behaved district. In May 1931 there were ten important crimes as against three in May 1930 ; in June 1931 there were 36, in July, 26, in August, 13, whereas in June, July and August 1930 no important crime occurred whatsoever. The next two months (September, October) brought a rapid decrease in important crime which however remained well in excess of the corresponding period in 1930. From time to time it was learnt that reconnaissance tours by rebel dacoits from outside penetrated over the district border, but no rising occurred. There was a considerable amount of rebel propaganda on the usual lines and rebel emissaries, tattooers and magic merchants—the witch doctors of Burma—attempted several times to gain a footing in the district. On October 31st *Põngyi* U Ardeiksa and his disciple, U Zayanta, were arrested at Kyonkanzin village, Danubyu area, under section 3 of the Burma Emergency Powers Ordinance, 1931, on information received that they were secretly recruiting for “ Boh ” Aung Shwe. On November 4th, information was received that a Sesaya named Saya Eik *alais* Thein Aung was busy recruiting for the rebels at Alan village, 8 miles north of Maubin. Incidentally he was making a very pretty profit on his own account by selling charmed silver needles at four annas apiece. The place was raided on November 5th and the Saya was arrested. On his person were found a coil of silver wire for making charmed needles, a tiger tooth, a packet of magic red powder, some silver foil and an “ In ” or charmed design. This rebel agent had succeeded to some extent in unsettling the villagers by solemnly announcing to them that he would be followed by a galon force which would summarily exterminate all those who had not joined up with the rebels. In October it was discovered that a rebel pamphlet was current in the district, the burden of which was an exhortation to murder Government servants and non-Burmans for the sake of religion. The pamphlet is typical of the seditious propaganda put forth by rebel scribes who have consistently done their best to work up religious hatred in a country hitherto practically devoid of religious animosities. In October and November the *Põngyi* Sami-Shwe Tin dacoit gang became active and committed a number of outrages in Maubin and Bassein Districts. As far as is known, this gang had 6 guns and a plentiful supply of ammunition. It had little or no direct connection with the rebel movement, but latterly it had been in the habit of making rebel pretensions, presumably in order to enhance its prestige. For example, at one horrible dacoity committed on October 5th (Pyinmagon village) when a woman was tortured to death by fire, some members of the gang boasted that they were rebels. There can be little doubt that the gang would have co-operated with any rising that might occur. In Maubin, as in Bassein District, in spite of persistent seditious propaganda, the vast majority of the villagers asked nothing better than to be left in peace, and the district authorities managed to obtain ample and timely information.

but it was a period of anxiety, for, without constant vigilance and prompt preventive action there was, as in Bassein, always the possibility of a mad feverish insurrection suddenly running like an epidemic through the district.

#### *Minbu District.*

38. Up to May 1931, Minbu was practically untroubled by the rebellion or the crime wave, but in that month the chaos in the neighbouring district of Thayetmyo reached such a pitch that the contagion of lawlessness could hardly fail to affect Minbu. There was no widespread disposition to rebel, but the news from Thayetmyo stirred all the evil latent in the district. In May, 15 important crimes were committed against 5 in May 1930. In the next month there were 47 cases whereas no important crime at all occurred in June 1930. The climax was reached in July when 48 cases occurred against only one in July 1930. Thereafter the crime wave slowly sank—31 cases in August, 15 in September,—although there was a temporary revival in October when 24 important crimes were committed (only 3 occurred in October 1930).

39. Fortunately there were no rebel leaders on this troubled scene. Had there been a Saya Nyan or a Saya San at work in the district for a month or two beforehand, there can be no doubt that a rebellion could have been fairly easily engineered out of the abnormal expansion of rural crime. As it was, there was considerable danger of flying sparks from the Thayetmyo conflagration. At one time gangs of Thayetmyo rebels were raiding north of the Mindon road and on two occasions they penetrated into the Nagape township of Minbu District. The danger was, however, averted by the establishment of a line of Military posts in the north of Thayetmyo District. By September the District Superintendent of Police, Minbu, was able to report that there was not the smallest sign of rebel activity in the district. On the whole, it was fairly clear that the men of Minbu were, on the whole, not in sympathy with the rebel movement, and the advent of a detachment of soldiery in the Ngape township was heartily welcomed. A leading influential *Pôngyi* U Pyinnyazawtha of Chantha *kyaung*, Minbu, made it widely known that he strongly disapproved of the rebellion, and broadcasted a circular to that effect. Gradually the general excitement began to subside and the villagers started to give up the pipe guns they had been manufacturing in anticipation of trouble out of materials pilfered from the oil fields. With Thayetmyo pacified and the crime situation in hand, the danger of a rising in the district was averted.

#### *Toungoo District.*

40. As early as February and March 1931, the crime wave began to be felt in the district. From April to August inclusive it assumed alarming proportions. In April there were 15 important crimes, in May, 33, in June, 33, in July, 34, in August, 18, as against 1, 10, 4, 3, 2, in the corresponding months of 1930. Up to June, however, the increase of crime seems to have been only an indirect result of the general spread of lawlessness started by the rebellion. There does not appear to have been any considerable rebel organization at work, and, apart from the abnormal crime, village life went on much as usual. Thus in Toungoo the danger was not internal, but from outside the district, from the disturbed areas of Tharrawaddy, Prome and Allanmyo.

41. The first direct contact with the rebellion apparently came from Tharrawaddy when, according to reliable information a considerable number of Tharrawaddy rebels penetrated through the jungle and reached the neighbourhood of a village called Mobon which is situated in a difficult country between the Kun and the Mon *chaungs* in the south-western portion of the district. Here, with a secret base near Mobon, a considerable dacoit gang was formed which terrorised the neighbourhood with frequent outrages. This gang had rebel affinities, but from the outset its primary objective was plunder. The difficulty was to establish contact with these elusive criminals as the country in which they lurked between their outrages is thinly populated, densely wooded and cut up by *chaungs* which, in the rains, may at times

become impassable. However, on the 15th of September a party of Karen Irregulars attached to the Forest Assistant of Messrs. MacGregor's came upon 12 to 14 members of the gang resting on the banks of the Kun *chaung*. No casualties were inflicted, but the dacoits had to decamp so quickly that they left behind them their firearms and other weapons and the loot of several unreported dacoities. A column was detailed to hunt down the gang, and early in October several harbouring villages were completely surprised and rounded up. Unfortunately it was impossible to surprise Mobon itself owing to the flooded state of the Kun *chaung*. However, one of the dacoits was captured and one other lost his life in the Kun *chaung* while attempting to escape. Towards the end of October arrangements were made to establish a post in Mobon manned by Karen Irregulars. Little by little the gang was mopped up. In the middle of November one of its camps up in the Yomas was found and attacked, with the result that a dacoit was wounded and captured and four others gave themselves up.

42. In the meantime a large rebel dacoit gang, some 33 strong, started to flourish in the Allanmyo Subdivision. The leader was a man called Chet Paung *alias* Cheik Paung and his second-in-command was a certain Ni Ta. It was essentially a dacoit gang but of the more violent and desperate type which had become common in all the disturbed tracts in the second phase of the rebellion. As early as the 27th of August this gang dacoited the village of Chaungmagyi on the Toungoo side, but no general move in the Toungoo direction seems to have been made till the month of October. On October 11th, no less than four dacoities were committed in the region of the Allanmyo-Toungoo border. The Kathitsan dacoity in which 31 houses were attacked and the Pyinmadaw dacoity were on the Allanmyo side, but the Payagon and the Upper Payagon dacoities were on the Toungoo side. A few days later on October 18th occurred two more dacoities on the Toungoo side at Seiksin and Zadipon. It was clear that the ever increasing pressure exerted by Government forces on the Allanmyo side was causing this gang to seek a fresh and less well-protected area for its activities, and unless it was checked promptly there was a grave danger that a state of widespread disorder might be started on the Toungoo side, creating just that tense atmosphere of fear and lawlessness which is particularly favourable for the genesis of rebellion. Accordingly on the 28th of October, the Toungoo Circle Inspector of Police concentrated a force of armed police and Karen Irregulars at Chaungmagyi close to the district border and later established them in four posts between Kyaukmasin and Zadipon, covering a distance from north to south of about 27 miles. Strenuous patrolling was carried out daily from these posts, thereby blocking the four passes into the Yinganbauk area (Toungoo District) from Thayetmyo District. On the 13th of November, the Circle Inspector of Police took the initiative and started to penetrate right into the border area. With the help of some brave and loyal headmen, he ultimately succeeded in capturing 15 of the gang, while the Chin Irregulars who were patrolling the Allanmyo side captured 6. The gang brought off a final outrage on November 24th at Kyaukkhwe in the Yinganbauk area, wantonly burning 6 houses, but by the end of November the gang was broken up and on the run. Early in December three more of these dacoits gave themselves up to the Allanmyo Chin Irregulars and the second-in-command, Ni Ta, followed suit shortly afterwards. Thus the whole gang was accounted for with the exception of Chet Paung himself and one follower.

43. In November the hard-pressed rebel dacoits of Prome District also began to turn their attention towards Toungoo District. It is certain that the notorious "Boh" Chet Su took a prominent part in the incursions which took place, but it is not known definitely whether any other Prome gangs ventured over the border. On November 17th a large gang attacked Pyaungchaung near the Prome-Toungoo border and the next day a gang of about 50 rebel dacoits with many firearms attacked a ration depôt maintained by the timber firm of Messrs. MacGregor & Co., Ltd., at Kyetsha in the jungle 43 miles west of Toungoo. On the same day guns were looted from Thitgyimyaung near Kyetsha. Between November 22nd and November 26th attacks were made on 5 of Messrs. MacGregor's elephant camps situated about 15 miles south-west of Yinganbauk and 8 miles east of the junction of the Allanmyo-Prome-Toungoo borders. This was followed up with a series of dacoities, one of which, the

Banbwagon dacoity, is worth noting for the fiendish cruelty practised by the dacoits. Kerosine was poured over the lower half of the unfortunate victim and he was set alight with the result that his legs and buttocks were cruelly burnt. Thereafter fire was applied to the tips of the fingers and toes of his wife. On December 10th an attack was made on Messrs. MacGregor's rice depot at Seinye on the Kabaung stream, about 16 miles west of Oktwin, and on the same day two other dacoities occurred. In one of these, the U-zun-te dacoity, a gang 20 strong, said to have been led by a certain Deedu from the Paungdè area, came to the place on the 9th pretending that they were Government men tracking down criminals. The next morning, being dissatisfied with the breakfast provided, they abandoned their pretence and plundered the place in their usual style. Chet Su with a gang of 20 was encountered, on December 12th or 13th, at a remote spot in the jungle called Nga Pyu's Te, and suffered several casualties and as already stated in paragraph 42 Chet Su himself surrendered in Prome District a few days later.

The danger of rebel infection from Tharrawaddy, Prome and Allanmyo was thus definitely checked by the end of the year 1931.

### *Criminal Trials.*

44. It was realized early in the rebellion that the ordinary criminal courts would not be able to cope with the trials even of leaders. An Ordinance, called the Burma Rebellion (Trials) Ordinance, was promulgated in March 1931, under which Special Tribunals and Special Judges could be appointed who could take up cases without committal proceedings. This Ordinance was replaced by the Burma Rebellions (Trials) Act, which was passed by the Legislative Council in September 1931. A tribunal, consisting of Mr. Justice Cunliffe, Mr. Darwood, retired Sessions Judge, and U Ba U, Sessions Judge, was appointed under the Ordinance. The first case they tried was that of the Pyapôn rebellion, after which they proceeded to Tharrawaddy and tried four other cases, dealing altogether in the five cases with 305 prisoners. Other cases were tried, as a rule, by Special Judges, except in Yamèthin District where the case was tried by the Sessions Judge, and in the Shan States where three Burmans were tried by the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, as Sessions Judge, and a number of Shans were tried by the State Courts of Hsipaw and Lawksawk. Cases are still proceeding and are not likely to be completed for several months. Up to the end of February, 55 death sentences have been passed, of which 19 were carried out, reprieves being granted in the remaining cases. Over a hundred accused have also been sentenced to transportation, most of whose cases are to be reviewed at the end of different periods fixed in consideration of the part played by them in the rebellion.

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